

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OPR-02 A-01 MMO-01 EB-07 SS-15 SP-02

L-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01

USIA-06 PRS-01 SY-05 /069 W
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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9990

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 1601

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BEXP, BU

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN REQUEST TO OPEN COMMERCIAL OFFICES IN CHICAGO
AND SAN FRANCISCO

REF: A) STATE 239363 OCT 31, 1974; B) STATE 252212 NOV 15, 1974;
C) SOFIA 2004; D) HELSINKI SECTO 8090

1. IT IS ALMOST A YEAR NOW SINCE THE BULGARIANS FIRST
RAISED, DURING THE POPOV VISIT LAST SEPTEMBER, THE POSSIBILITY
OF OPENING TRADE OFFICES IN CHICAGO AND SAN FRANCISCO. THIS
MATTER SHOULD NOW RECEIVE ACTIVE CONSIDERATION, WITH A VIEW
TO GIVING THE GOB A POSITIVE REPLY IN THE NEAR FUTURE, FOR
A NUMBER OF REASONS.

2. THE TREND IN U.S.-BULGARIAN TRADE IS DISTINCTLY
UP. WE TRIPLED TRADE BETWEEN 1973 AND 1974; AND ACCORDING
TO LATEST AVAILABLE FIGURES, OUR TRADE DURING THE FIRST FOUR
MONTHS OF 1975 IS WELL ABOVE WHAT WE DID IN ALL OF 1974
(\$30 MILLION). IF CAREFULLY NURTURED, THIS TREND CAN CON-
TINUE TO OUR ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ADVANTAGE, EVEN IN THE
ABSENCE OF MFN.

3. I UNDERSTAND THERE ARE SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS,
BUT IN AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COST/BENEFIT RATIO OF THE
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TRADE OFFICES BELIEVE BENEFITS TO US COULD BE FOUND

TO OUTWEIGH POTENTIAL LIABILITIES. CERTAINLY WE SHOULD NOT LOOK AT GRANTING PERMISSION FOR SUCH OFFICES AS A FAVOR WE WOULD BE DOING BULGARIA. EXPANSION OF TRADE IS IN MUTUAL INTEREST. THE QUESTION OF TRADE OFFICES SHOULD THEREFORE BE DECIDED ON ITS MERITS, AND NOT AS PART OF OTHER MATTERS THAT WE WILL BE DISCUSSING WITH THE BULGARIANS AT A LATER TIME (REFTEL D).

4. THERE WAS A QUESTION, RAISED IN PARA 3 REF B, WHETHER AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN HAVE DIFFICULTIES GETTING INTO BULGARIA AND WHETHER WE MIGHT ASK SOMETHING BY WAY OF RECIPROCITY OF THE BULGARIANS FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE OFFICES. THIS WAS ANSWERED IN REF C.

5. DURING MY CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON IN MAY, I HAD IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS NO OPPOSITION TO GIVING THE BULGARIANS A FAVORABLE RESPONSE, BUT PAPERS DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE MOVED TO OBTAIN THE NECESSARY CLEARANCES. WE SHOULD NOT WAIT FOR A PARTICULARLY AUSPICIOUS OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE A POSITIVE DECISION ON THIS MATTER TO THE BULGARIANS. ON THE CONTRARY, CONVEYING A FAVORABLE RESPONSE SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO CREATION OF AN AUSPICIOUS CLIMATE FOR THE DISCUSSION OF OTHER MATTERS. IN ANY CASE NOTHING WILL HAPPEN IF WE KEEP DELAYING THE INTERNAL US DISCUSSIONS NECESSARY TO OBTAIN A DECISION.

6. ACCORDINGLY I SUGGEST THAT STATE, COMMERCE, FBI AND ANY OTHER DEPARTMENTS OR AGENCIES WHICH MIGHT BE INVOLVED, GET TOGETHER ON THIS MATTER DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS SO THAT A COORDINATED USG POSITION CAN BE DEVELOPED WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

7. I WISH TO EMPHASIZE THAT THE BULGARIANS ARE NOT PRESSING THIS MATTER. MY CONCERN IS THAT BY OVERLOOKING THIS RELATIVELY MINOR MATTER WE SHOULD NOT MISS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DO SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE, SOMETHING WHICH WOULD BENEFIT OUR EXPORTS AND AT THE SAME TIME INJECT A POSITIVE ELEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA WHICH HAVE BEEN STAGNATING LATELY DUE LARGELY TO OUR UNRESPONSIVENESS TO THEIR PROPOSALS.
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